

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

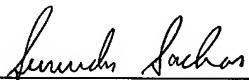
The present application is a divisional of co-pending parent U.S. Patent Application No. 09/459,574, filed December 13, 1999. In that parent application, a restriction requirement was set forth.

Claims 15-16 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-14 and 17-27 are canceled by the present amendment.

Accordingly, an action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

GJM:SS:ZSS:dnf

I:\ATTY\ZS\24'S\244176US2 DIV\244176 PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT.DOC